DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 590 EA 028 626

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TITLE An Evaluation of Lottery Expenditures for Public School Safety in Georgia.

INSTITUTION Emory Univ., Atlanta, GA. Rollins School of Public Health.
SPONS AGENCY Georgia Council for School Performance, Atlanta.
PUB DATE 1996-10-00
NOTE 50p.; Prepared at the Emory Center for Injury Control.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Expenditures; Program Effectiveness; *Public Schools; *School Safety; School Security; School Support; *State Aid; Violence
IDENTIFIERS *Georgia; *State Lotteries

ABSTRACT

In 1994, approximately $20 million of Georgia Lottery for Education funds were spent to make schools safer. This report presents the results of an evaluation of Georgia Lottery for Education expenditures for technologies related to school safety. The study evaluated the safety technology at 15 Georgia public schools. Data were gathered through interviews with school administrators, security personnel, teachers, and students about drugs, alcohol, firearms, and violence in the schools and on-site inspections. Overall, students and staff perceived that their own school was safe, but felt that other schools might be unsafe. Drawbacks to the technological security interventions included unanticipated expenditures and a negative impact on public perceptions of school safety. The report recommends that policymakers examine the magnitude of school violence relative to other safety problems faced by students and staff; target spending to schools with identified safety problems; increase the emphasis on school climate and leadership as primary determinants of school safety; share information and resources among schools; and integrate evaluation into the design and dissemination of any new school-safety initiative. One table is included. Appendices include a map of the evaluated regions and sample application forms and guidelines. (LMI)

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An Evaluation of Lottery Expenditures for Public School Safety in Georgia

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An Evaluation of Lottery Expenditures for Public School Safety in Georgia

Executive Summary

Background

Violence and drug use in our schools are of great concern to the American public. In response, many schools have turned to technology in an attempt to make their campuses safe for both students and staff.

In 1994, approximately $20 million of Georgia Lottery for Education funds were spent to make schools safer. These funds were spent for items such as metal detectors, video surveillance cameras, security systems, and communications equipment. All of these technologies are costly.

Policy makers need to know whether these technologies actually help make schools safer. Although there are many opinions about what creates a safe school, rigorous evaluations are lacking. This report presents the results of an evaluation of Georgia Lottery for Education expenditures for technologies related to school safety.

Methods

We performed evaluations of school safety technology at fifteen Georgia public schools. All sites were informed that their decision to participate in this project was voluntary and all participants were guaranteed complete confidentiality.

We interviewed school administrators, security personnel, teachers, and students about drugs, alcohol, firearms, and violence in the schools. Our evaluation team toured school grounds and inspected security equipment. We examined the decision-making process that influenced local expenditures, the implementation and use of security equipment, and whether these interventions had an impact on school safety.

Key Findings

- Student and staff generally perceive that *their* school is safe, but feel that *other* schools may be unsafe.
- Students and staff are angered by what they feel is unfair negative media reporting on public schools.
- Administrators request state assistance and training in local public relations campaigns.
- Respondents feel that human relationships are more important than technology in determining school safety.
- Administrators viewed the funding announcement and application process favorably.
- In most cases local needs assessment was inadequate and there was no planning for impact evaluation.
- Schools are discovering unanticipated expenses related to recent security technology purchases.
- Many technological interventions have a negative impact on public perceptions of school safety.
- Given the poor quality of available data, it is impossible to measure the impact of these expenditures on school safety.

Recommendations

- Examine the magnitude of school violence relative to other safety problems faced by students and staff.
- Target spending to schools with identified safety problems rather than diluting resources across all schools.
- Increase the emphasis on school climate and leadership as primary determinants of school safety.
- Share information and resources between schools.
- Integrate evaluation into the design and dissemination of any new school safety initiative. Disseminate only those proven to be effective. Identify and avoid those proven to be unsuccessful.

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I. Introduction:

A. The Problem

Violence and drug use in the nation's schools are frequently cited as top concerns of the American public. Media reports have emphasized an increasing level of violence on school campuses. In response to highly publicized incidents many schools have turned to metal detectors, drug-sniffing dogs, violence prevention curricula, and other measures in an attempt to make their campuses safe for students and teachers alike.

Since all of these options are costly, we must ask how we can best use our resources to make schools safer. Although there are a lot of opinions about what creates a safe school, rigorous evaluations are lacking. This report presents the results of an evaluation of Georgia Lottery for Education expenditures for school safety.

B. The Program

1. Background

In 1993, the Georgia General Assembly established the Council for School Performance, an independent body whose mission is "to provide impartial and accurate information so that schools and the communities they serve will have appropriate benchmarks for performance and accountability."[1] As part of this mission, the Council has been charged with describing public school utilization of funds derived from the Georgia Lottery for Education.

In April 1994, the Council selected the Applied Research Center (ARC) of Georgia State University to serve as project staff and implement its work. In September of 1995, the Emory

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[1] Council for School Performance. Annual Report 1994.

Center for Injury Control was invited to submit a proposal for an evaluation of expenditures for school safety, as one of ARC's Lottery Evaluation and Assessment Projects. This document is a report of this evaluation.

2. Goals

After consulting with key workgroups involved with Georgia public education, the Council for School Performance adopted the eight National Education Goals presented in the 1994 Federal Goals 2000: Educate America Act as a framework for their activities. Goal number seven addresses school safety:

- *"By the year 2000, every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning."*

3. Activities

In pursuit of this goal, for fiscal year 1994, approximately $21 million of Georgia Lottery for Education funds were spent to make schools safer. Twenty million dollars of this amount was used for capital improvements, primarily for the purchase of security systems, metal detectors, video cameras, communications equipment, and fencing. Another $1 million was spent on drug and anti-violence education, principally for texts, posters, and videos. Table 1 details 1994-95 school safety expenditures by category:

1994-95 Safe School Expenditures		
Type of Device Purchased	**Dollar Amount Reported**	**Percent of Total Dollars Encumbered**
Facility Video Surveillance Systems	9,119,772	47.4
Intercom Systems	3,368,423	17.5
Bus Video Surveillance Systems	2,327,264	12.1
Fences or Gates	1,296,113	6.7
Radios/Walkie-Talkies	1,154,838	6.0
Walk-Through Metal Detectors	459,529	2.4
Security Systems	457,854	2.4
Lights	306,583	1.6
Hand Held Metal Detectors	202,518	1.1
Telephones	64,796	.3
Miscellaneous	489,933	2.5
TOTALS	$19,247,506	100.0

C. Evaluation Questions

Our evaluation is designed to answer questions related to the dissemination of lottery funds, implementation of interventions, and the impact of these countermeasures on school safety and violence. Specifically, with regard to the dissemination process, we were interested in how schools were informed of the availability of lottery funds and how the application process influenced local applications for funding. We also examined the nature of the local decision-making process and the concordance between school safety needs and countermeasures. We checked to see if lottery funds were spent as planned, and we looked for evidence of their impact on school violence and/or perceptions of school safety.

II. Program Evaluation

A. Evaluation Design

1. Evaluation Objectives and Scope

At the outset, we decided to focus on lottery spending for capital expenditures (i.e., equipment) rather than educational interventions. We did this for three reasons: 1) 95% of school safety funds were used for capital expenditures with a relatively small amount expended for drug and anti-violence education; 2) drug and anti-violence curricula were uniformly distributed to each school site; 3) evaluation of school-based drug and anti-violence programs is a complex task that is currently receiving attention from others.[2]

We performed both process and formative evaluations of Georgia lottery expenditures for school safety. Process evaluation documented program procedures and activities and the degree to which they conformed to legislative intent. Formative evaluation produced data intended to document program feasibility and improve on implementation of future efforts. We evaluated:

1. The decision-making process that influenced local expenditures of lottery funds and the resulting concordance between local needs and expenditures.

2. Implementation and use of lottery funded equipment (e.g., installation and operation of video cameras, metal detectors, intercoms, etc...).

3. Impact of school safety interventions as determined by interviews with administrators, security personnel, teachers, and students.

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[2] Webster DW. The unconvincing case for school-based conflict resolution programs for adolescents. *Health Affairs* Winter 1993: 126-141.

B. *Sampling Strategy*

We divided the state of Georgia into five regions, and planned to visit three schools in each region (Appendix A). In selecting evaluation sites, we chose one middle school and two high schools, one "high expenditure" and one "low expenditure" school from each region. In each region, we also identified an alternative site in the event that one of our original schools declined to participate.

C. *Evaluation Measures*

Both formative and process evaluations were addressed during one day site visits to each of the fifteen schools. Prior to the visit, we contacted each school's principal or administrative representative and described the nature of our project. All sites were informed that their decision to participate in this project was voluntary. School officials were assured confidentiality and informed that the object of our evaluation was the Georgia Lottery for Education and not their specific school.

We then mailed a detailed letter to each school's principal describing the purpose of our visit, the type of information in which we were interested, and the groups we wished to interview (Appendix B). To make the evaluation as open as possible, a copy of our evaluation proposal was sent to each school (Appendix C). Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. Parental consent was obtained for all student interviews as well (Appendix D). Responses were analyzed in aggregate; they were not linked to individuals or schools.

1. Administrators

During each site visit we conducted semi-structured interviews with school *administrators* regarding drugs, alcohol, firearms and violence in the schools. We explored the intent of projects related to safety in relation to these concerns and the decision-making process that influenced these

choices. We reviewed project applications, objectives, implementation plans and expenditures. We determined if school disciplinary records were available for current and prior years, and we asked if reporting the Council's proposed school indicators was perceived as a burden by school administrators.

2. Security Personnel / Equipment

With school *security personnel*, we conducted semi-structured interviews regarding use and perceived impact of safety-related equipment. We toured the school and grounds, inspected equipment, and determined whether it was installed and functional at the time of our visit. We also inspected school buildings and grounds to assess if other safety needs were unmet.

3. Teachers and Students

We conducted separate, confidential focus groups with *teachers* and *students* to assess their attitudes toward school safety expenditures and their views of the impact of lottery funded safety spending.

D. Analysis

For the most part, our evaluation produced descriptive data. When high quality baseline data were available, we attempted to compare pre- and post-implementation frequencies of safety-related incidents involving alcohol, drugs, firearms and violence. We have included anonymous quotes from administrators, security personnel, teachers and students to illustrate points made during our interviews.

III. Results

A. *Site Visit Process*

Of the fifteen schools initially selected, only one declined a visit. This site was replaced by the pre-selected alternate from the same geographic region. These fifteen sites reflect the diversity of Georgia's public school system. Five were located in urban, metropolitan settings, eight were located in small towns or suburbs, and two were in rural areas. At the time of enrollment, student populations at the sites ranged from 500 to 2,500 with an average enrollment of 1,400 students. The two smallest schools were the result of recent efforts to reduce the size of previously crowded schools.

Ethnic composition of the schools varied widely and reflected historic and recent demographic shifts. Two sites served an essentially 100% African-American student body. One school was almost totally White in composition. The proportion of African-Americans in the remaining twelve schools ranged from 10% to 70% of the student body. Three sites reported a significant and increasing proportion of Hispanic students. None of the sites had significant numbers of Asian-American students. Two sites reported high student turnover rates due to the presence of a military base installation in their area.

Members of the evaluation team visited thirteen of the fifteen sites. Visits generally lasted from four to six hours. For two schools, we were unable to arrange a visit due to schedule conflicts; however in-depth phone interviews were conducted with administrators from these two sites.

In general, all schools were open to the evaluation process. Each was assured confidentiality. At each site, the evaluation team was allowed sufficient access to administration, security personnel,

teachers and students. Finally, at each site, we were able to tour the school building and grounds and inspect existing security equipment.

B. Results of Focus Groups

1. General Perceptions of School Safety

"Our school is safe because we, the kids, choose to make it safe." – a High School Student

"The problems we have come from the community. We don't need to fence the kids inside, we need to fence out the community." – an Assistant Principal

Almost every administrator, teacher and student we interviewed expressed the belief that their school was a safe place. Although they felt their schools were safe, many pointed to other schools, particularly in the inner city, that they felt were unsafe. This opinion was equally true for staff and students at urban, inner city schools. They felt their school was safe, but that other inner city schools were unsafe.

Security personnel we talked to, and in particular, those with a law enforcement professional background, were less likely to express such positive statements regarding school safety. Many advocated increasing levels of school security staff and safety technology.

2. Public Perceptions of School Safety

"They, the public, think you have a gun pointed at you every day!" – a High School Student

"People in the community think that we are in danger because of the hi-tech equipment and this has affected school choice." – a High School Teacher

"We have a good relationship with our local paper. The editor is a graduate of our school. What is good for the community is good for him and the school." – a High School Principal

Administrators, teachers, and particularly, students voiced the strong opinion that media reports unfairly portray public schools in a negative light and ignore their positive accomplishments. The general impression was that schools received little coverage that was not linked to sensational, and often violent, events.

In communities where private schools are established and actively recruit, we encountered resentment that private schools were apparently immune from media scrutiny. Many of the students we interviewed believe that private schools have similar or worse problems with violence and drug use, but that these conditions are hidden from the public for fear of adverse effects on private school enrollment.

The more successful schools had close working relationships to community and business leaders and the local media. Several school administrators acknowledged that they had limited time and skills to effectively manage public relation campaigns in their community. Many suggested a need for assistance in this area.

3. Lottery Expenditures

"Statistically, we don't have that much crime here so that the amount of money spent was far more than justified by the situation." – a High School Teacher

"Technology and mechanical devices cannot replace human relations." – a Vice Principal

During our site visits, we heard the recurring theme that it was the quality of human relationships, rather than technology, that determines the safety of schools. A high level of trust among students,

teachers, and administration is the foundation for appropriate student conduct and an environment conducive to learning. In this atmosphere, students are more likely to state their safety concerns to school staff. In every school we visited, this was the most common manner in which safety problems and in particular, the presence of firearms, were discovered and addressed.

Although expenditures for safety-related capital equipment were viewed positively, many voiced the opinion that these funds might have been better spent on additional staff or academic initiatives. In general, administrators and security personnel viewed safety technology more favorably than teachers and students.

C. *Evaluation of Specific Steps*

1. Dissemination of Announcement

Governor Miller's letter informing schools of lottery fund availability urged principals to base requests on a local school safety plan. The letter specifically mentioned that the funds could be used for "... *video cameras for buses or hallways, other monitoring devices, or even metal detectors if that is what the local schools want.*" A copy of the letter and guidelines with a typical application are contained in Appendices E-G. Administrators were pleased with the simplicity of the application process and the wide latitude given to requests based on local needs.

2. Local Decision Making

The announcement of fund availability implied a bottom-up process of local needs assessment and expenditures targeted to local problems. In practice, however, the thoroughness of needs assessment varied widely between communities. Most principals made some effort to obtain input from teachers. A few schools developed a comprehensive safety plan with input from the

community, parents, students, security personnel, and administration. Others submitted proposals with little evidence of input from these groups.

Many schools had the assumption that funds from the lottery would be spread widely and that justification of need was less important than submitting a request for "something." The mention in Governor Miller's letter of video cameras and metal detectors was mirrored in many requests for funding. It does not appear that there was a close relationship between the degree of an individual school's safety problem and the level of funding requested.

Following our visits, we were left with the impression that vendors of security-related equipment may have had a significant impact on local decisions. Video camera equipment vendors, in particular, seemed closely involved in the local decision making process. Given the limited nature of our evaluation, it was difficult to document the amount of influence exerted by vendors.

Plans to evaluate the impact of expenditures were cursory. These efforts were hampered by the lack of valid measures of school safety, a topic that is addressed in our companion evaluation report, *An Evaluation of Proposed School Safety Indicators for Georgia*. Most decisions were based on anecdotal data; often interventions did not match well with stated needs. As an example, vandalism and thefts on school grounds were frequently cited as a need for video surveillance equipment, yet cameras were most often placed inside school buildings.

3. Implementation of Interventions

Most equipment purchased with Lottery funds was in place and operating during the time of our site visits. By using this equipment, schools tended to become more aware of specific safety problems. In many cases, additional security concerns were raised in this process and the mismatch between equipment and local needs became more apparent. During our visits, we

received many requests for advice on how to use recently purchased equipment. Common purchases included metal detectors, video cameras and communication equipment.

a) Metal Detectors

Hand held wands were the most commonly used devices for metal detection. Five of the schools we visited purchased walk-through detectors as well. Staff were very aware of policy regarding metal detector use and all stressed that their searches conformed to recognized legal standards regarding search and seizure.

Schools that had initially planned to screen all students on arrival at school soon abandoned this approach as unfeasible. For random searches, the most effective approach we witnessed involved periodically placing a walk-through detector at the door of randomly selected classrooms and requiring students to pass through the detector at the end of class. This was followed by a manual search of the room for prohibited items. At one site this search was conducted with the assistance of a "drug-sniffing" dog.

At most sites, systematic searches were concentrated at the beginning and the end of the school year or semester. This was done to increase awareness of the searches. Metal detectors were rarely used for after-hours functions, such as sporting events. Administrators reported a higher frequency of metal detector use than reported by students and teachers at the same school.

b) Video Cameras

Although interviewees indicated that violence and vandalism most often occurred on school grounds and in outbuildings, most video cameras were directed at monitoring activity *inside* school buildings. Most were concentrated at sites that were currently well monitored by school staff,

including cafeterias, school hallways, and classrooms. The intent was to use these cameras to record, rather than detect, inappropriate or violent behavior. This videotape could then be replayed for students and parents. No administrator planned to use video cameras to monitor teacher behavior in the classroom. Many schools plan to expand their video surveillance into problematic areas on the school grounds.

When cameras were placed outside, inadequate lighting of parking lots and school property limited the effectiveness. Some outdoor cameras had suffered damage from lightning. Others were tipped out of an appropriate line of sight by students. Many were not functioning at the time of our visit. Many schools had not budgeted adequately for maintenance of this equipment.

Buses in some sites were outfitted with cameras. In some cases these were automatically activated whenever the bus was operated. In others, they were activated by bus drivers.

Cameras wired into remote viewing locations were rarely monitored. Although videos were continuously recorded, staff had difficulty identifying specific students on these videotapes due to camera angles, poor lighting, or poor image quality.

c) Communications Equipment and Alarms

These items included walkie-talkies, phones, call-back intercoms, and building alarm systems. Most prominent were hand-held walkie-talkies, distributed to administrators, security personnel and teachers performing monitoring duties. Although many schools had already installed building alarm systems, some had recently installed systems using Lottery funds. All these systems seemed to be functioning well during our visit.

4. Perceived Impact

a) Metal Detectors

"It is not my job as an educator to run a metal detector. This school is not an airport." – a Vice Principal

"I want to decorate it and use it for the Homecoming arch so we'll get it out at least once this year." – a High School Teacher

"I get stopped for my flute and piccolo all the time." – a High School Student

"The only reason we got metal detectors is that the media 'bought them for us'. The decision to use Lottery money for this equipment was made by the media." – a High School Principal

We were unable to identify a firearm discovery attributable to *random* metal detector use. In all cases of discovered firearms, students informed staff of the firearm's presence on school grounds. This report was often followed by a search with a metal detector, usually involving one of the hand-held wands.

Metal detectors were *independently* important in disclosing the possession of knives, razors and a variety of other potential weapons. Interestingly, they were also instrumental in discovering drugs on a number of occasions. These were identified during searches prompted by the metal detector. In many instances, students simply admitted to drug possession during the search.

Of course, the major benefit of metal detectors may be as a deterrent to firearm possession on school grounds. It is impossible to confirm or refute this possibility without better baseline data.

Use of metal detectors can have a negative on a school's image as a safe place. Many students and staff expressed concern that these devices send the message that their school is unsafe.

b) Video Cameras

"The video cameras give me a sick feeling. Twenty years ago, we didn't have things like that. I look at them and know that everything has changed." – a High School Teacher

"The videotapes prove to a parent what their child has done." – a High School Vice Principal

"They will need to be repaired some day and we don't have a maintenance contract." – A High School Principal

"The cameras are a joke. They don't even turn them on." – a High School Student

"The cameras have made my job safer." - A School Bus Driver

In general, video camera surveillance was not used to detect violence in the school. As noted above, video screens are rarely monitored. However, administrators feel that by their presence, video cameras are a deterrent to violence. It was also felt that replaying videotapes of inappropriate behavior to students and parents sends a more powerful message than simply describing these actions.

When violence or vandalism was caught on videotape, it proved difficult to positively identify the participants due to technical limitations of the equipment. We did not find evidence that videotapes had been used in disciplinary hearings at any school site.

Students we interviewed were well aware of video camera limitations and were dismissive of this technology. Most felt that after their novelty evaporates, students pay video cameras little attention.

Although the majority of students expressed this opinion, some evidence suggested that video cameras had a positive impact. When we asked how they would feel if cameras were removed, some students admitted that they would feel less secure.

c) Communications Equipment and Alarms

Communications equipment and alarms were typically the most valued Lottery funded security items. Administrators, security personnel and teachers feel much less isolated when this equipment is available. Teachers seem to value this technology the most and urged that it be widely available. This is especially true for teachers who work in school buildings at night, and for those who teach in mobile classrooms or isolated buildings on larger campuses.

IV. Discussion

A. Positives

1. Dissemination of Announcement

The announcement that funding was available for safety-related capital expenditures was well-disseminated to Georgia's public schools. All school officials we interviewed were aware of the announcement in a timely fashion.

2. Simple Application Process

The simple format of the application reduced real or perceived barriers that might have otherwise discouraged applicants from smaller school systems with less developed grant-writing skills.

3. High Funding Rate

All sites that obtained funding were pleased with the speedy results of their application efforts. It appears that almost everyone who applied was funded in the first year. Sites that did not receive funding under this program chose not to apply. They did not place blame for this with the state.

4. Responsive to Local Concerns

Most administrators, security personnel and teachers felt that the program was responsive to their concerns. All felt that the expenditures were based on local needs as determined through their safety planning process.

B. Negatives

1. Insufficient Planning and Evaluation

Although key respondents told us that local concerns were well represented in this process, it is unclear to the evaluation team that local planning was sufficient to optimally use these funds. There was no real requirement to document the need for this equipment and little effort was given to evaluating the long-term impact of these expenditures.

2. Hidden Costs

In addition, there is little evidence that resources have been set aside for the long-term maintenance cost of this equipment. A few schools included maintenance contracts in their budget; others did not. Training was also a problem. After purchasing equipment many schools found that they did not know how to use it effectively.

3. Negative Impact on School Image

Many interviewees felt that their security expenditures were excessively influenced by sensationalized media reports of school violence. They were also concerned that the installation of security equipment had created negative perceptions of their school's safety. In general, these interviewees felt funding should be allocated to additional staff and academic initiatives, rather than security technology.

C. Evaluation Strengths and Limitations

Our evaluation has a number of strengths and weaknesses that should be recognized. We studied a stratified sample of sites that were broadly distributed over the state. We evaluated a wide variety of schools including middle schools and high schools with low and high safety-related expenditures. Although this evaluation was completed on a modest budget, we feel that we obtained a representative look at the program.

We concentrated our evaluation effort on capital expenditures rather than drug and anti-violence education. This choice maximized our ability to evaluate that portion of expenditures consuming the bulk of lottery funds available for safety-related initiatives. We cannot make statements about

the effectiveness of drug and anti-violence educational efforts. Evaluation of educational efforts is needed, but it was beyond the scope of this project.

Our evaluation generated useful information on the planning and implementation of the program, but we found little evidence of program impact. The lack of carefully obtained baseline, pre-intervention data makes impact evaluation a difficult, if not impossible, task. If further expenditures are considered it would be wise to pursue targeted spending in school districts that are willing to participate in outcome studies. This information could then be shared with the rest of the state and used to drive spending decisions.

For the most part, schools were very receptive and accommodating to our evaluation efforts. We wish to thank all school personnel for the generous amount of time and effort expended in helping us complete this evaluation. This report will be sent to all of the schools we visited. We invite their reactions.

V. Recommendations

A. Determine the Relative Magnitude of the Problem

School safety is, and should be, a major concern. Spending to improve safety is an understandable response. However, most security and safety concerns for students are outside rather than inside the school. Incidents on school grounds before and after school, or in the community, or at home, pose a far greater threat to student safety than those occurring at school. Ironically, for many students the school building is the safest place to be. To realistically increase students' level of safety, we must place a greater emphasis on activities outside the school building and outside school hours.

B. Target Spending to Identified Problem Areas

Most school safety spending has been for technology that has been focused inside the school building. Communication equipment and alarm systems seem to have been most effective in enhancing the *perception* of school safety, with less evidence for video camera and metal detector impact.

However, any evaluation of spending impact has been limited by poor quality baseline data and the lack of valid indicators of school safety. This is the subject of our companion report, *An Evaluation of Proposed School Safety Indicators for Georgia*.

C. Increase Emphasis on Improving School Climate

Personnel and the quality of the relationship between administration, teachers and students are defining characteristics of safe schools. Safe schools are characterized by clear leadership, well-communicated policies, a sense of community and mutual respect. These qualities are less tangible and more difficult to promote and disseminate than security technology. They require an emphasis on training and education of school staff. In a climate that promotes these qualities, technology can help, but when these qualities are lacking, security equipment will not have much impact.

D. Share Information and Resources

Although Georgia schools exhibit a wide range of security concerns and needs, there is reason to believe that sharing of information and resources is a more efficient method of improving school security than conducting a multitude of local efforts. Lessons learned through intensive evaluation efforts at one site may be generalized to schools that share a similar environment without repeating this effort in every public school in Georgia.

Many schools have more than enough resources to meet their security needs. As an example, metal detectors can be made mobile, and shared widely through districts or across the state, using a trained team and random search processes. This effort could lower the costs of this technology to any one school system with no loss in effectiveness.

E. Evaluate Interventions

This evaluation represents a preliminary and limited evaluation of security-related expenditures in Georgia. This is a useful starting point, but it lacks the methodological rigor necessary to determine the true cost-effectiveness of these interventions.

To guide future spending decisions, policy makers should place a greater emphasis on study design and impact evaluation. Particular attention should be paid to random sampling techniques, longitudinal follow-up, and the collection of valid impact data. It is important to understand how decisions were made and how security technology is used in Georgia public schools, but it is more important to learn whether these expenditures make schools more secure and decrease student injuries.

Evaluation efforts should attempt to include outcomes that are relevant to the health of students as well as the health of the school. While we should carefully examine data regarding violence and injuries in the school, we should not ignore other important influences on the school environment. The public perception of school safety is an important outcome if it influences the public's willingness to invest in and send their children to Georgia's public schools. For this reason, public opinion surveys may be a useful measure of program impact.

Funding for evaluations with stronger designs will depend on obtaining grants specifically for this purpose. Funding agencies with a programmatic interest in identifying school security

interventions that work include the National Institute of Justice, the National Institute for Mental Health, and the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

VI. Acknowledgments

We want to thank the Applied Research Center of Georgia State University for allowing us to perform this evaluation and for providing us with assistance in contacting school sites. We particularly want to thank the many school administrators, security personnel, teachers and students we had the good fortune to meet with across Georgia.

We hope that this evaluation effort will help local and state policy makers prevent the violence and drug use that can hinder schools from performing their primary mission -- educating the students of Georgia.

VII. Appendices

Appendix A. Map of evaluation regions.

Appendix B. Letter to principal describing site visit.

Appendix C. Copy of evaluation proposal.

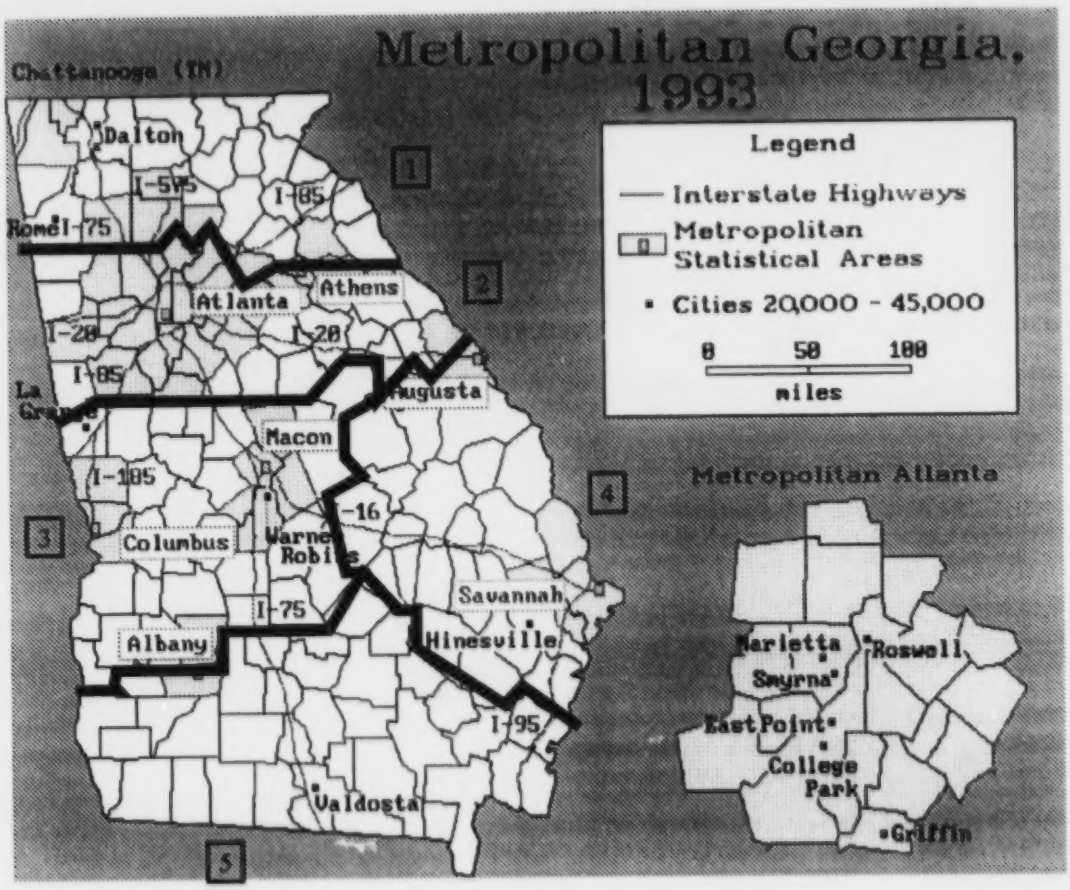
Appendix D. Informed consent forms.

Appendix E. Announcement of fund availability.

Appendix F. Guidelines for application.

Appendix G. Typical application.

A. *Evaluation Regions*



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B. Letter to principal describing site visit

THE ROLLINS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
OF EMORY UNIVERSITY
1518 CLIFTON ROAD, N.E., ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30322

Center for Injury Control

Phone: (404) 727-9977
FAX: (404) 727-8744

August 20, 1996

. Principal
High School

GA .

Dear Mr.

Thank you for allowing our school safety site visit scheduled for Tuesday, May 14th. I look forward to meeting with your staff. . , your assistant, has been particularly helpful during my phone calls. left a voice message that he is expecting me on this date. You may want to forward this letter and package of information to him.

We will plan to arrive at 1:00 PM on Tuesday. Although we can probably find the school, it might be safer to give us explicit directions. We would appreciate it if you could fax those to us.

The goal of this evaluation is to improve the Georgia Lottery for Education program. As part of this evaluation, your school was chosen at random. Our report will not focus on specific school sites, but will present information in aggregate for fifteen schools across Georgia. We hope that this evaluation will have a beneficial impact on the program statewide, but would not expect it to influence any decisions regarding your particular school.

We plan to make our evaluation process as open as possible to you. In order to help with this I have enclosed a complete copy of our evaluation plans. Please be assured that during our visit, we will make every effort to limit disruption of your normal schedule.

We hope to spend approximately four hours at the school. In this time, we would like to hold four separate meetings. I have enclosed a brief outline of agenda for these meetings. Please feel free to select participants and schedule these as you see fit. If there is anyone else you would like us to meet during our visit, we will, of course, be happy to do so.

I have enclosed parent/guardian consent forms for the meeting with students and would ask that you send these home with the students you choose prior to our visit. You may want to send consent forms home with ten or fifteen students in hopes that we can obtain at least seven completed forms.

In the outline I have also listed examples of written materials that might facilitate our discussions. If any of these are readily available to you, we would appreciate a copy by mail or fax so that we could review it prior to our visit. Please do not feel compelled to spend excessive effort on this task, as we can also review this material during our visit. In conducting this evaluation, we hope to cause as little extra work to you and your staff as is feasible.

Thank you again for your time on the phone today. I look forward to visiting with you. If you have any questions prior to the visit, please contact me by phone or e-mail.

Sincerely,

Knox H. Todd, MD, MPH
Phone: (404) 727-1265
FAX: (404) 727-8744
todd@sph.emory.edu

Enclosures: Copy of evaluation proposal, Proposed meeting agenda and materials, Consent forms for parent or guardian (15)

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School Safety Assessment -- Proposed Agenda and Materials

1. **Administration**: We hope to meet with administrative representatives to discuss school safety issues, particularly those involving violence, firearms, drugs and alcohol. This might involve a meeting with you or one or two of your administrative staff and should take no longer than one hour.

   Topics: As our major evaluation focus, we would like to learn of your present or proposed uses for lottery funded capital improvements, including your decision-making process, objectives and implementation plans. We would also like to hear your opinions regarding the school and community indicators proposed by the Council for Educational Performance. We are particularly interested in the availability of school safety data for prior years in order to establish a baseline for determining the impact of any school safety interventions. (Please see the enclosed evaluation plan for a more complete explanation of this focus.)

   Materials: For a better general understanding of your school, we would appreciate information on school enrollment, demographics, and the local socioeconomic climate, if possible. We would like to review any documents involved in the planning and application process for state lottery funds related to school safety, if available. We would also like to review school statistics pertinent to violence, drugs and alcohol (e.g., disciplinary actions, suspensions, expulsions), and any written policies involving these areas.

2. **Security Personnel**: We would like to spend one or two hours with school security personnel to discuss safety concerns, procedures, and training. During this time, we plan to tour the school grounds and examine any safety-related equipment, such as metal detectors, communication equipment, or fencing.

   Topics: We will discuss perceptions of violence in the school, use of safety related equipment, and training of school security staff.

   Materials: A map of the school and grounds would be helpful during this meeting. We would also like to review written policies regarding use of safety related equipment and training of security personnel.

3. **Teachers**: We plan to conduct a one-hour focus group with a five to ten teachers.

   Topics: We will explore teachers' views and concerns toward school safety and their perceptions of any safety-related interventions you may have implemented.

   Materials: For this meeting, we will need a relatively quiet, private space.

4. **Students**: We would like to conduct a one-hour focus group with seven to twelve students. These students should be of approximately the same grade level to facilitate communication. We prefer a representative sample of students, if possible.

   Topics: We will explore students' views and concerns toward school safety and their perceptions of any safety-related interventions you may have implemented.

   Materials: For this meeting, we will need a relatively quiet, private space.

(We would appreciate any written material you could send us prior to our arrival. Of course, we can also review this during the day of our visit. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding the meetings or requested materials. Thank you again for your time and efforts.)

Knox H. Todd, MD, MPH
Emory Center for Injury Control
1518 Clifton Rd., NE
Atlanta, GA 30322

Phone: (404) 727-1265
Fax: (404) 727-8744
Email: todd@sph.emory.edu

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C. Copy of evaluation proposal

Lottery Evaluation and Assessment: School Safety Expenditures

Knox H. Todd, MD, MPH
Center for Injury Control
The Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University

Submitted to the Applied Research Center of Georgia State University
October 5, 1995
Revised: November 8, 1995

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Lottery Evaluation and Assessment: School Safety Expenditures

Knox H. Todd, MD, MPH
Center for Injury Control
The Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University

Submitted to the Applied Research Center of Georgia State University.

Background

In 1993, the Georgia General Assembly established the Council for School Performance, an independent body whose mission is "to provide impartial and accurate information so that schools and the communities they serve will have appropriate benchmarks for performance and accountability."[1] As part of this mission, the Council has been charged with describing public school utilization of funds derived from the Georgia Lottery for Education.

In April 1994, the Council selected the Applied Research Center (ARC) of Georgia State University to serve as project staff and implement its work. In September of 1995, the Emory Center for Injury Control was invited to submit a proposal for a preliminary evaluation of expenditures for school safety, as one of ARC's Lottery Evaluation and Assessment Projects. This proposal outlines an evaluation of these expenditures.

Program Description

Goals

After consulting with key workgroups involved with Georgia public education, the Council for School Performance adopted the eight National Education Goals presented in the 1994 federal *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* as a framework for their activities. . Goal number seven addresses school safety and states that...

- "By the year 2000, every school in the Unites States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning."

Activities

In pursuit of this goal, for fiscal year 1994, approximately $21 million of Georgia Lottery for Education funds were spent to make schools safer. Twenty million dollars of this amount was used for capital improvements, primarily for the purchase of security systems, fencing, cameras, and communications equipment. Another $1 million was spend on drug and anti-violence education, principally for texts, posters, and videos.

---

[1] Council for School Performance. Annual Report 1994.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Objectives and Scope

The Council for School Performance plans to employ two types of standards, school indicators and community indicators, to monitor the state of public schools and serve as outcome measures of program impacts. For the 1994-1995 school year, the following pilot indicators were proposed for goal seven by the Council:

School Indicators

- Number of disciplinary actions and unduplicated counts of students involved in disciplinary actions by category: drugs or alcohol related, violence, firearms, and destruction of school property.
- In-school suspensions as a percentage of total suspensions.
- Percentage of tribunal referrals placed in alternative schools.
- Percentage of students expelled.

Community Indicators

- Percentage of 12-17 year-olds involved with juvenile court system.
- Violent crime rate for the county/city per 1,000 population.

The school and community indicators listed above reflect a comprehensive and long-term commitment to impact evaluation of the Georgia Lottery for Education program. In addition to this summative evaluation, policy makers and program administrators will need information from the process and formative stages of evaluation to assess program implementation and its impact on intermediate outcomes.

In addition to the outcome measures listed above, we propose to perform process and formative evaluations of Georgia lottery expenditures for school safety. Process evaluation will document program procedures and activities and the degree to which they conform to legislative intent. Formative evaluation will produce data to document program feasibility and improve on its implementation. We will evaluate:

1. The validity, reliability, comprehensiveness and relevance of current school and community indicators.
2. The availability of data reflecting the safety of schools in previous years in order to establish a baseline for determining impact of school safety interventions.
3. The decision-making process that influenced local expenditures of lottery funds and the resulting concordance between legislative policy and local initiatives.
4. Actual implementation of lottery funded interventions (e.g., equipment purchases, installation, etc.).

5. Current uses of lottery funded interventions.

6. Burden of reporting associated with safety-related school indicators, as perceived by administrative staff.

7. Intermediate outcomes of current school safety interventions including perceptions of program impact by administrators, security personnel, teachers, and students.

Of the approximately $21 million spent for safer schools, $20 million was used for capital expenditures with only $1 million expended for drug and anti-violence education. This drug and anti-violence educational intervention was relatively uniformly distributed to each school site. Evaluation of school-based drug and anti-violence programs is a complex task that is currently receiving much attention from others.[2] For this reason, our evaluation will focus primarily on safety-related capital improvements, evaluating needs and interventions at the local level.

Evaluation Design

We will perform site visits to each of the fifteen schools, with one day allotted to interviewing key stakeholders in school safety concerns. These will include school administrators, security personnel, teachers, and students.

We will perform formative and process evaluations at each of the fifteen schools. We will conduct open-ended interviews with school administrators to determine their concerns regarding school safety particularly with respect to violence, firearms, drugs and alcohol. We will explore the intent of projects related to safety in relation to these concerns. We will also assess the availability of school disciplinary records from current and prior years and the burden of reporting the Council's proposed school indicators as perceived by these administrators.

With school security personnel, we will assess the actual implementation of lottery funded projects. We will inspect the actual use of this equipment, and determine whether it is functional. We will test metal detectors by passing through them materials with physical properties similar to firearms. We will also inspect building entrances to determine whether firearms could bypass metal detector stations.

With teachers and students, we will conduct small focus groups to assess attitudes toward school safety issues and their perception of the impact of lottery funded safety programs.

Sampling Strategy

In choosing evaluation sites, we attempted to include a broad geographical distribution of schools. We divided the state of Georgia into five regions, and plan to visit three schools from each region, a total of 15 schools. In selecting evaluation sites, we will choose one middle school, one high expenditure and one low expenditure school from each region.

---

[2] Webster DW. The unconvincing case for school-based conflict resolution programs for adolescents. *Health Affairs* Winter 1993: 126-141.

Evaluation Measures

Target

Administrators

- Review of project applications, objectives, implementation plans and expenditures.
- Review of school statistics pertinent to proposed school indicators, with particular emphasis on quality and availability of data preceding program implementation (baseline data).
- Semi-structured interviews regarding drugs, alcohol, firearms and violence in the schools.

Security Personnel / Equipment

- Inspection of equipment including functional testing and deployment.
- Semi-structured interviews regarding use and perceived efficacy of equipment.

Teachers

- Qualitative focus groups to explore views on school safety.

Students

- Qualitative focus groups to explore views on school safety.

Analysis

For the most part, our evaluation will produce descriptive data. When high quality baseline data are available, we will compare pre- and post-implementation frequencies of safety-related incidents involving alcohol and drugs, firearms and violence.

Deliverables

By _____, we will provide the following two reports:

1. An evaluation of the Council's proposed impact evaluation for Goal seven, including a review of the validity, reliability, comprehensiveness and relevance of proposed school and community indicators.

2. A process and formative evaluation of current school expenditures related to school safety.

Dr. Todd and Dr. Kellermann will be available for presentation of these evaluation results to Council members and legislative committees as necessary.

Discussion

Our proposed evaluation has a number of strengths and weaknesses that should be recognized. We have chosen to evaluate sites that are broadly distributed over the state. This will maximize the number of stakeholders for whom the results will be of interest and this is our aim.

We will evaluate a variety of schools including middle schools and those with low and high safety-related expenditures. We hope that this evaluation effort will highlight any mismatch between need and expenditure of lottery funds.

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We have chosen to concentrate our evaluation efforts on capital expenditures rather than drug and anti-violence education. This choice maximizes our ability to evaluate that portion of expenditures consuming the bulk of lottery funds available for safety-related initiatives. We cannot make statements about the effectiveness of drug and anti-violence educational efforts. That evaluation is needed but is beyond the scope of this project.

Our evaluation will provide primarily process and formative information, and is less likely to provide convincing evidence of program impact. The lack of carefully obtained baseline, pre-intervention data makes impact evaluation a difficult process. At this stage of program implementation, with decision makers' need for early information and feedback, we feel that process and formative evaluation represents the best use of state resources. If we determine that high quality baseline data exist in school records, we can compare school safety-related statistics pre- and post-intervention, providing some evidence of local program impacts.

Another potential limitation of this evaluation is that school staff may be reluctant to cooperate with our efforts. We will attempt to limit this reluctance by maximizing our use of existing records, and performing our evaluation as openly and efficiently as possible.

Conclusion

The evaluation process, as envisioned by the Council for School Performance, represents an ambitious attempt to maximize the efficiency of lottery fund expenditures. We applaud their focus on school safety, drug abuse, firearms and violence and are pleased that we have been asked to propose this evaluation. In the future, we hope to be able to integrate the evaluation component into the early stage of program design for any school safety-related initiatives.

Data resulting from this process should assist policy makers in a comprehensive and systematic effort to prevent the drug abuse and violence that inhibit schools from performing their primary mission -- educating the students of Georgia public schools.

D. *Informed consent forms*

Document of Informed Consent - Parent or Legal Guardian

Title of Project

School Safety Evaluation and Assessment
Knox H. Todd, MD, MPH, Principal Investigator

Description of the Interviews and How they Will be Conducted

The Center for Injury Control of Emory University is working to learn more about school safety in Georgia. We are conducting small group interviews with students and teachers to hear about their views on how we can improve the safety of Georgia schools. We think that your child will enjoy these interviews and hope that this information will assist us in improving the safety of Georgia students and teachers.

In the interview we will ask your children about safety in the schools, where in the school they feel most safe, and how they feel Georgia schools can be made safer. Although we will share information from the interviews with others, no information will be traceable to your child personally. Any information your child gives us will be kept in a locked file cabinet and destroyed after five years.

Your child's participation in this interview is strictly voluntary. Even if your child agrees to participate in the interview, he or she can refuse to answer part or all of any questions asked and can leave the group at any time. We will attempt to make this as relaxed and comfortable a process for your child as possible.

Research Rights:

If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact Knox H. Todd, MD, MPH, at phone number (404) 727-1265. Thank you for your participation in this effort.

Parent or Legal Guardian's initials_____

****

I have read this document or have had the document read aloud to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions regarding participation and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given the opportunity to refuse to allow my child to participate in this group interview, and I have freely chosen to allow my child to participate. I understand that my identity and the identity of my child will be kept confidential and that my child's responses will not be identified with him/her or with me. I further understand that my child's responses will not be used for commercial purposes.

I give permission for my child to participate in this group interview. A copy of this document has been given to me. Any further questions I may have will be answered by Knox H. Todd, MD, MPH of the Emory University Center for Injury Control. Dr. Todd can be contacted in Atlanta at (404) 727-1265.

Signatures

_____

Participant's Name

_____

Parent or Legal Guardian Date

_____

Group Interview Moderator Date

_____

Principal Investigator Date

Document of Informed Consent - Participant

Title of Project

School Safety Evaluation and Assessment
Knox H. Todd, MD, MPH, Principal Investigator

Description of the Interviews and How they Will be Conducted

The Center for Injury Control of Emory University is working to learn more about school safety in Georgia. We are conducting small group interviews with students and teachers to hear about your views on how we can improve the safety of your schools. We think that you will enjoy these interviews and hope that this information will assist us in improving the safety of Georgia students and teachers.

In the interview we will ask you about your perceptions of safety in your schools, where in your school you feel most safe, and how you feel schools can be made safer. Although we will share the information from the interviews with others, no information will be traceable to you personally. Any information you give us will be kept in a locked file cabinet and destroyed after five years.

Your participation in this interview is strictly voluntary. Even if you agree to participate in the interview, you can refuse to answer part or all of any questions asked and you can leave the group at any time. We will attempt to make this as relaxed and comfortable a process for you as possible.

Research Rights:

If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact Knox H. Todd, MD, MPH, at phone number (404) 727-1265. Thank you for your participation.

Participant's initials_____

****

I have read this document or have had the document read aloud to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions regarding participation and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given the opportunity to refuse to participate in this group interview, and I have freely chosen to participate. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and that my responses will not be identified with me. I further understand that my responses will not be used for commercial purposes.

I agree to participate in this group interview. A copy of this document has been given to me. Any further questions I may have will be answered by Knox H. Todd, MD, MPH of the Emory University Center for Injury Control. Dr. Todd can be contacted in Atlanta at (404) 727-1265.

Signatures

_____

Participant Date

_____

Group Interview Moderator Date

_____

Principal Investigator Date

E. Announcement of fund availability

STATE OF GEORGIA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ATLANTA 30334-0900

Zell Miller
GOVERNOR

November 10, 1993

TO: The Principal

Improving education in Georgia has always been my top priority, and while the lottery is certainly not a panacea for improving education, it is already funding some very needed programs for Georgia students that we otherwise could not afford.

The lottery is providing prekindergarten for four-year-olds at over 130 sites throughout Georgia. It is providing college scholarships to students who graduated from high school last year with a "B" average. It is paying the tuition for all the students in diploma programs at our technical institutes. And it is providing technology in our schools, including satellite dishes at every school, college and technical institute, and computers for our elementary schools.

This year, the Georgia lottery has produced more revenue for education than we had originally budgeted. The initial projections of lottery revenues were deliberately very conservative, and the lottery will raise an additional $83 million this fiscal year. I have developed a comprehensive plan for spending these lottery proceeds that will benefit your schools and your students.

I am proposing that we use $10 million in lottery proceeds to help purchase security equipment at our schools. You may recall that I have proposed a six-point school safety plan, and the first point is to urge schools at the local level to involve law enforcement officers, parents and community leaders in developing a school safety plan. The $10 million in lottery proceeds will help to purchase the equipment necessary to implement that safety plan. It could include providing video cameras for buses or hallways, other monitoring devices, or even metal detectors if that is what the local schools want.

I also propose that we provide $17,500 for technology in the media center in YOUR SCHOOL and every other school in Georgia, for a total cost of $32 million. Last spring I visited more than three dozen of Georgia's best schools, the Schools of Excellence and the schools that produced STAR students. While I was there, I learned firsthand about some of their most urgent needs. The media center is the heartbeat of any school, and this money will allow your school to purchase the

equipment you need so that your students can learn more effectively. This may include multi-media work stations, video production units, computer data bases that increase students access to knowledge and information, or computerized card catalogues.

Lottery money will also fund the additional students who are taking advantage of the HOPE scholarship program, which is the most extensive scholarship program of its kind in the nation. Lottery monies will also go toward the purchase of equipment for our technical institutions. And finally, I strongly believe that it is prudent and responsible to put $10 million into a reserve fund for the time when the lottery may not do as well as it has this year. By doing this, the lottery will have a total of $24 million in reserves.

I appreciate your tireless work to improve education in Georgia. This comprehensive plan for spending the additional lottery revenues will benefit your schools and your students. I would appreciate your support as we continue to work together to improve the educational opportunities available to the children of Georgia.

With kindest regards, I remain

Sincerely,

Zell Miller

ZM/ds

F. Guidelines for application

Fiscal Year 1995 Safe School Grant Application Guidelines

Governor's Initiative to Provide Security Equipment for Georgia's Schools

The major purpose of the Governor's initiative is to provide security equipment funding for all schools that develop a Safe School Plan Application.

Guidelines/Procedures/Criteria

1. Each school is to develop, revise, or amend a Safe School Grant Application based on its own determined needs. Security concerns should be documented.

2. Applications should be developed according to the attached format and be no longer than three pages in length, including a detailed budget for security equipment.

3. Applications are to be developed in collaboration with parents, students, community and business leaders, and the local law enforcement agency. The signature page of the Safe School Grant Application must include a signature from each of the groups involved.

4. Grants are available for all schools.

5. Typical use of the grant includes the purchase of monitoring equipment, metal detectors, emergency "call-back" intercom systems, or any other device or system that will enhance student, teacher, or school safety.

6. The application must be fiscally realistic.

7. Documentation for both need and expenditure is essential. There will be normal audit requirements. A line-item budget for equipment must be included.

8. Methods used in determining the effectiveness and impact of the security equipment must be identified.

9. The Safe School Grant Application must be submitted to the Department of Education on or before February 20, 1995.

G. *Typical application*

Georgia Department of Education
FY 94 Safe School Plan

System Name _____ System Code _____
School Name _____ School Code _____

Complete the following items:

1. Describe your school's security needs/concerns.

frequently experiences emergency or security type situations. campus is located in a busy and often unsafe area. The staff must constar deal with unauthorized individuals who come on to the campus and create disturbances. The school has an excessive amount of vandalism. There hav also been a few instances in which students brought weapons to school. Th school needs equipment that will help its students and staff feel more saf and secure during the school day as well as after-school hours. At the pr time only a small section of rooms has call-back intercom capabilities, or portion of the building is equipped with night-time security, and the two-

2. Describe your plan of action to meet the security needs/concerns.

We would like to install call-back intercom connections in all classrooms. would like to have all areas of our campus equipped with video cameras anc night-time security alarm system. We would also like five portable radios a portable phone.

3. Describe how you will evaluate the impact of the equipment on your school's security/safety.

A log will be kept recording all instances which require the use of the security equipment. A survey of teachers and students will be conducted determine their opinions regarding the impact of the equipment on the sch

4. Please list the equipment you plan to purchase.

	Item Description	Actual Cost
1.	Emergency Call-Back Intercom System	$8500.00
2.	Motorolla Portable Radios P50/50+	$1790.00
3.	Security Alarm System	$3,000.00
4.	Video Camera System	$20,000.00
5.	Portable Phone	$130.00

** radios are in ill-repair.

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